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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002376

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [MCAP](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [MARR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF IRAQ'S MINISTER OF INTERIOR AFTER ONE MONTH

REF: A. BAGHDAD 001844

[B](#). BAGHDAD 001995

[C](#). BAGHDAD 002210

Classified By: Classified by Political-Military Counselor Ronald E. Neumann for reasons 1.4 (a), (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (S/REL UK AND AUS) SUMMARY: In the month since Minister of Interior Baqir Jabor took office, he appears to be delivering on his initial commitments (ref A). Jabor retained qualified personnel regardless of their ethnic background or political affiliation, while also developing a plan to remove unqualified personnel. Jabor traveled to Najaf to discuss national versus provincial roles with the Governor and Chief of Police. To emphasize the importance of the provincial Chiefs of Police, Jabor held a national conference in Baghdad his second week in office. Although rumors and innuendo are always circulating, there is no specific evidence to support widespread concerns of a Shia-led security strategy within the Ministry of Interior (MoI) directed against the Sunni. Nothing is guaranteed to last, but Jabor seems to be actively reforming the MoI to address the security challenges Iraq is facing. END SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (C/REL UK AND AUS) SENIOR PERSONNEL: Jabor's personnel actions are commendable. Prior to making any personnel decisions, Jabor sought recommendations from the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office (IRMO)-MoI advisors and the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I). Jabor has met with his Deputies on multiple occasions, both as a group and individually. Jabor kept his word on retaining MG Adnan (a Sunni and the uncle of the former Minister of Interior) as the head of the special police, including the commandos. After extensive consultation, Jabor retired two Deputy Ministers: MG Hekmet (Deputy Minister for the Iraqi Police Service) and MG Abdul Jabal (Deputy Minister for the National Crime Agency). Replacements have not been decided; however, Jabor intends to replace Hekmet with a young Sunni with career law enforcement experience based upon the individual's capabilities and not simply time spent in the Ministry. We have a generally poor view of Hekmet; letting him go is a sound decision.

[1](#)3. (C/REL UK AND AUS) RANK AND FILE: Jabor stated he would not add to the ranks of the police for political patronage. Jabor plans personnel system reforms that would release from duty or retire his predecessor's numerous Samarah patronage hires; "ghost" employees, who are on the payrolls, but perform no clear service for the ministry; employees identified as unqualified by the MoI Qualification Committee (MOIQC) (ref B); personnel age 60 or over (subject to waiver); and those charged by the inspector general with corruption. Jabor asserts a commitment to retaining "hard-working professionals." However, the predominantly Sunni work force (and likely the broader Sunni population) may perceive the terminations as a purge of their ranks. Jabor is faced with significant budget constraints and understands that the number of police on the payroll needs to be reduced significantly.

[1](#)4. (C/REL UK AND AUS) PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL JURISDICTION: Last month, the MoI hosted a two-day Chiefs of Police conference that did not yield any specific results, but was valuable symbolically. Sixteen provincial Chiefs of Police attended; never before had this been accomplished. The provincial representatives stayed late on a Thursday evening and even met on their day off, Friday. CPA Order 71, which outlines, inter alia, provincial and national level authorities, was discussed at length among the attendees. A healthy debate ensued with some attendees claiming ignorance of CPA Order 71, and others disagreeing with the order. The real value of the conference was the opening of lines of communication.

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15. (C/REL UK AND AUS) The Minister's trip to Najaf was a clear indication of his intention to address issues head-on. Initially, there was concern that Jabor would not fully engage with IRMO-MoI advisors; the opposite has been true, as evidenced by the IRMO-MoI advisor accompanying the Minister to Najaf (ref C). Once again the Minister kept his commitment to address problems that had been ignored by the previous Minister.

16. (S/REL UK AND AUS) COMMENT: There is widespread concern of a Shia security strategy to purge the MoI ranks of Sunnis and implement a MoI de-Ba'athification plan. Jabor was handed a Ministry with serious personnel, leadership, control and financial problems. The proactive agenda pursued by the Minister fits the task of reforming the Ministry; however, the dismissal of Sunni MoI employees, raids on Sunni insurgents and discussions with Shia leaders (such as Grand Ayatollah Sistani) leave an impression of a Shia plot against the Sunni.

17. (S/REL UK AND AUS) COMMENT CONTINUED: Nothing we are seeing is guaranteed to remain the same. Although the Minister continues to do and say the right things, we will remain vigilant. The Minister is politically astute and a skilled technocrat who knows his every move is being watched for signs that Iran, the Shia, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and/or Badr Corps are controlling the Minister behind the scenes and directing unprovoked action against the Sunni population or implementing a separate de-Ba'athification policy. We also remain cognizant of Shia influence in the south and continue to watch for incidents of Shia purging Sunnis from the police ranks at the provincial and local levels and installing SCIRI/Badr loyalists in their stead. There are some indications that this may be occurring, albeit quietly (septel). Jabor appears to be his own man; however, it is unclear to what degree his decisions are influenced by SCIRI, particularly its leader Hakim. END COMMENT.

18. (U) REO Basrah, REO Hillah, REO Mosul and REO Kirkuk minimize considered.

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